

## **Post-Event Summary Report**

**Name of Event:** Trident Area Community Forum

**Date of Event:** March 14, 2005

**Location of Event:** Gaillard Municipal Auditorium, 77 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC

**Number of Persons Attending:** 132 registered participants

**Sponsoring Organization(s):** ElderLink (Trident Area Agency on Aging), City of Charleston, SC Geriatric Education Center, SC Aging in Place Coalition, Low Country Senior Network, Mass Mutual, College of Charleston, Franklin and Associates, Low Vision Solutions, Bishop Gadsden, Home Helpers, and Wells Fargo

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Please follow this format for each priority area, with the most important listed first. **Please ensure that your organization's name and contact information is provided at the bottom of each page submitted.**

### **Priority Issue # 1: Healthcare**

Healthcare services in the Trident Area are limited to seniors because access to care is often unavailable and unaffordable. Healthcare service providers have minimal training in geriatrics and lack incentives to serve older adults.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1.) Limited access to care (ie. Transportation to medical, dental, and/or eye care appointments)
- 2.) High cost of prescription drugs
- 3.) Lack of knowledge about services and programs
- 4.) Minimal training of the medical community on aging

#### **Proposed Solution(s):**

- 1.) Involve the faith-based community to assist in increasing knowledge about healthcare resources available to seniors and to increase access for medical, dental, and/or eye care appointments.
- 2.) Urge interest groups to advocate for increasing expanded healthcare benefits and providing more money for healthcare services.
- 3.) Encourage health professional boards and associations to offer incentives for healthcare providers who receive geriatric training.

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### Priority Issue # 2: Senior Friendly Communities

Safe, public transportation services in the Trident Area are not affordable, reliable, and accessible to seniors in the rural and urban areas.

#### Barriers:

- 1.) Lack of funding for liability protection from state and local government
- 2.) Lack of a safe environment conducive for a public transportation system
- 3.) Escalating gas prices

#### Proposed Solution(s):

- 1.) Involve the faith-based community to assist in providing transportation to medical and non-medical appointments.
- 2.) Educate the community about the impact that population density has on transportation.
- 3.) Transportation providers should coordinate services to eliminate gaps and duplication in services.
- 4.) Utilize smaller vehicles rather than busses to provide the transportation service.
- 5.) Provide subsidized transportation services through taxi companies.

#### Recommendation:

A safe public/private transportation system that covers liability and subsidized services for seniors that includes affordable, reliable services to medical/non-medical destinations from rural/urban areas that provides dignified door-to-door services.

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### **Priority Issue # 3: Care giving**

Unpaid caregivers are faced with financial challenges, a decline in their spiritual, emotional, and physical health, and lack the necessary training and support to keep care recipients in the home.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1.) Inability to work outside of the home and provide full time care
- 2.) Lack of resources to pay for respite care, personal care, personal care items, and medication
- 3.) Injuries in the home

#### **Proposed Solution(s):**

- 1.) Provide increased training to caregivers on financial management, proper lifting techniques, and stress reduction
- 2.) Encourage private companies to provide on-site adult day programs
- 3.) Provide more community-based funded respite
- 4.) Encourage companies to provide family leave for caregivers
- 5.) Use lottery dollars to fund programs for older adults
- 6.) Provide a monthly stipend to caregivers
- 7.) Tax incentives for private companies donating funds to assist with caregiver services

#### **Recommendation:**

To create more funding sources for senior caregiver services including more community-based programs for in-home care, caregiver training, respite, supplies, medication, and volunteer respite workers. Actively pursue and implement public, private and faith-based partnerships, including tax credits and incentives for corporate participants and family caregivers.

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### **Priority Issue # 4: Long Term Care and a Continuum of Care**

The system for long term care (LTC) and a continuum of supportive care is inadequate to meet the needs of the growing older adult population.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1.) High cost of long term care and medications
- 2.) Multiple entry points into the long term care system
- 3.) Lack of consumer knowledge of entry points and available services
- 4.) Complicated Medicaid eligibility requirements for both the consumer applicant and the facility applicant
- 5.) Lack of choices in rural areas

#### **Proposed Solution(s):**

- 1.) Improve the environment for workers in the institutional setting
- 2.) Increase the pay, supervision, and recognition of workers in home care programs and LTC facilities
- 3.) Encourage financial planning for the future
- 4.) Educate the public about the entry points, costs, and availability of services

#### **Recommendation:**

Prioritize public funds so that adequate public resources are available to pay for the Long Term Care of our aging population. There should be an adequate quantity of home care, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities so that consumers have choices, including rural areas. Consumers should also have available affordable medications to prevent further deterioration of their physical and mental status.

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### **Priority Issue # 5: Planning for the Financial Future**

Older adults can no longer be totally dependent on Social Security and retirement pensions due to their prolonged length of years in retirement [averaging 25-30 yrs]. Financial planning for retirement is no longer required by businesses and corporations, as this responsibility has been directed to the individual.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1.) Borrowing from Social Security to support other programs (ie. the war in Iraq)
- 2.) Not enough money in the Social Security Fund to support retirees for the future
- 3.) Lack of education in financial planning
- 4.) Lack of awareness that Social Security is an insurance and pension program

#### **Proposed Solution(s):**

- 1.) Emphasis on education for all young adults by school, financial institutions, and employers
- 2.) Education on long term care financial planning
- 3.) Education on debt management
- 4.) Explore flexible pre-tax benefits for retirees
- 5.) Explore adjustments to stabilize Social Security

#### **Recommendation:**

Social Security should be restored to its financial long term health before any changes are made.

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